

IASC PSEA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting
14 August 2024
15:00-16:30 (GVA/CET)

Meeting Summary

Agenda

1. Update on the PSEA Coordinator Training (IOM, WHO)
2. PSEA Coordinator Deployment and PSEACap (OCHA, NORCAP)
3. Briefing on the Experience Piloting MDS (by UNHCR)
4. Review on TAG Action Plan Progress (All)
5. Point on the Draft IASC Task Force 2 on AAP Draft Resource Package
6. AOB

1. Update on the PSEA Coordinator Training (IOM, WHO)

Alexandra Hileman from IOM updated the TAG on the progress towards carrying out the PSEA Coordinator training in September. IOM informed TAG members of training participants contracted with their organisation. The participant list includes 5 PSEACap roster members, 9 full-time or acting PSEA Coordinators, and 11 other individuals from the open call for applications. Thanks to work with WHO, the training has been expanded from 4 days to 5 days, through the inclusion of soft skills competencies. IOM highlighted concentrated efforts from TAG members to make this event happen. USG Christian Saunders will join the final day of the training to meet incoming alumni.

Christos Mylonas from WHO briefed about the soft skills topics his organisation is adding to the training, including emotional intelligence, network management, negotiations and influencing, problem solving, and self-care. These soft skills and the training as a whole align with the new UN workstream on PSEA learning, presenting a valuable opportunity for collaboration and developing lifelong learning pathways.

A question was asked about the application process for the training. There were 250 applications for 25 places. A 5-question checklist was used to score shortlisted candidates. TAG colleagues suggested broadening the eligibility criteria to include peacekeeping actors and expanding the training to two courses per year instead of one. Conducting the training in French and Spanish was also highlighted as something to put into practice to allow more potential participants to take part.

2. PSEA Coordinator Deployments and PSEACap (OCHA, NORCAP)

The IASC PSEAH Unit gave an update on PSEA deployments, drawing attention that several contracts and deployments are going to expire before the end of the year. Out of the 15 highest risk contexts according to SEARO risk-index, 13 currently have dedicated PSEA coordinators. Mali and Yemen currently have interim arrangements only. In DRC, there are 2 colleagues at national level.

Overall, there are currently 24 dedicated PSEA Coordinators working at a national level in SEA high-risk contexts (SEARO risk index). Seven dedicated PSEA coordinators could see their contract expire before the end of 2024, renewal pending additional resource mobilisation. These are Burkina Faso (6 December 2024, PSEACap deployment considered), Cameroon (1 December 2024), DRC Kinshasa (30 November 2024), Nigeria (31 December 2024), NW Syria, covering WoS (30 September 2024), NE Syria (30 September 2024), and Venezuela (17

October 2024). Some contexts have found funding or new contracts, for example the Syria networks are transferring from IOM to UNFPA from 1 October 2024, but others are still exploring options. PSEACap focuses on 15 highest-risk countries, meaning that securing new funding for Cameroon, and Venezuela might need collective contributions by the HCT, if not resources from a bilateral donor can be secured. The IASC suggested that TAG members reach out to their counterparts in the above-mentioned countries to encourage potential collective funding arrangements, in those countries where PSEACap cannot intervene (beyond the top 15 at-risk countries, according to the PSEACap prioritisation).

NORCAP reported that there are currently 8 PSEACap deployments. PSEACaps have just deployed to Colombia and Myanmar, with the Myanmar Coordinator temporarily based in Bangkok due to a lengthy visa application process. Two more countries, Burkina Faso and Mali, are under discussion for receiving a PSEACap, although Expressions of Interest have not yet been received.

3. Briefing on the Experience Piloting MDS (by UNHCR)

This briefing was given by Amer Delic, Senior Policy Advisor for UNHCR, with support from Miroslava Satinova (UNHCR HR) and Susana Waltman (UNHCR Legal). MDS falls under Commitment 1 of the Strategy, Activity 1.4.1. of the Workplan. For rolling out MDS, UNHCR advised TAG members to adopt a gradual approach and a centralised process (relieving the field from additional burden); troubleshoot problems; and integrate MDS with existing processes.

UNHCR stressed the importance of piloting MDS through a combination of policy, HR, and legal, and that a pilot cannot be carried by PSEA colleagues on their own. At UNHCR, the conversation on joining MDS started in 2019. A cross-functional set of stakeholders was brought on board, including inspection investigations services, field colleagues, PSEA, HR, and legal. Institutional processes were mapped out in their entirety, including hiring, recruitment, and reference checks. UNHCR used a phased approach to roll out MDS. It was first piloted for all international recruitments in November 2021, not including national and affiliate recruitment. This was followed by incentivising field officers to include MDS for G staff, national officers who were being hired directly on the ground. To do this, UNHCR firstly identified large operations with a large volume of recruitments and large volume of other NGOs, meaning a greater risk of perpetrators being recycled between agencies. Currently, all international recruitments and 7 relatively large operations have their local and affiliate recruitments running through MDS. An additional 7 country operations will be included in MDS from next month, meaning that 10% of local and affiliate recruitments will be covered. Although this is slow progress and there are high resource requirements, Amer says a gradual roll out is really important because a number of challenges come out, such as issues to monitor and resource requirements.

UNHCR legal talked about the legal risk, focusing on data protection concerns. All applicants for UNHCR jobs need to agree to UNHCR contacting previous employers. The UN's internal data protection policy mirrors GDPR, and knowledge of previous SEA allegations is considered to fall under UNHCR's legitimate interests. When data is exchanged between agencies, internal processes and standards apply, noting that different agencies participating in MDS apply different sexual misconduct framework. One issue the pilot revealed was delays in responses from other agencies. UNHCR therefore decided to allow recruitment to take place in parallel to stop delays, but hiring cannot occur without a reference check happening. If sexual

misconduct emerges after the recruitment, the employee will be immediately terminated. There have been no legal challenges or GDPR issues with national authorities so far in UNHCR's roll out of MDS. The most important lesson from the roll out is 'piloting' to work through issues and having a centralised process to coordinate and take burden from field offices.

UNHCR HR highlighted the importance of blending MDS into existing HR procedures, comparing it to classic reference verification. UNHCR already had a procedure for screening anyone trying to get into the organisation. Because UNHCR has thousands of candidates annually, they have hired a colleague to review applications manually. This approach is currently feasible and does not create an additional burden for country HRs. With an expansion of MDS, more staff might have to be hired to screen applicants.

During the Q&A, coordination and harmonisation between agencies piloting MDS was raised as a possibility, to compare added values, deterrence value, and the impact on HR processes. MDS will improve as more UN entities join. A request for feedback was also made from NGO members who have already piloted MDS. UNFPA volunteered to update the TAG on lessons learnt at a later date. The changes to existing language in job application were minor, to ensure that applicants give consent for UNHCR to contact previous employers for employment information. UNHCR must also confirm from other agencies that consent has been sought by them as well.

4. Review on TAG Action Plan Progress (All)

A further review of certain Action Plan activities and progress was carried out. As a result of discussions between OVRA, UNFPA, and UNICEF, new 1.2.1. and 1.2.2. activities have been created, stemming from activities 1.1.3. and 1.6.1. The plan is now to proceed with convening the practitioners' group. The importance of active participation by NGO colleagues to make this workstream of the Action Plan less UN-centric.

TAG members mentioned deadlines for their activities and offered to present to the group on their findings, for example UNICEF on their study of SEA reporting practices from September onwards. The WFP Championship team also gave feedback on their activities, highlighting work with the IPPWG and an upcoming global ToT event in October. The onboarding of the Women's Advisory Group was also mentioned, as well as cluster consultations. IASC PSEAH Unit encouraged TAG members to add timelines to the activities they plan to lead on.

Action point: TAG members to add timelines and updates on the TAG Workplan.

5. Point on the Draft IASC Task Force 2 on AAP Draft Resource Package

The AAP Draft Resource Package had been shared with TAG members on Friday 9 August. Although it is not SEA specific, PSEA stakeholders had been consulted in the process leading up to its finalisation. IOM and UNHCR as well as the IASC Secretariat had reviewed and provided extensive comments on the resource package from a viewpoint of coherence with the IASC SEA RP. The package contains guidelines, procedures, and standards to follow when a complaint is received. The PSEA TAG endorsed these materials.

6. AoB

a. New TAG members/observers.

IASC PSEAH highlighted a request from ILO to join the TAG as an observer. No objections were raised by TAG members.

b. TAG member mission planning.

IASC PSEAH presented a 'Mission-mapping' spreadsheet with the aim to coordinate more closely on technical support missions and identify opportunities for joint IASC technical support missions. The IASC invited TAG to complete the form up until the first quarter of 2025.

Action point: TAG members to add Missions into the [IASC TAG Mission Tracker](#)

c. Revival of IASC Field Support Team.

IASC PSEAH presented the idea to revive the IASC Field Support Team, which existed in 2020 and consisted of 8 special support agencies. This team would provide precious technical expertise in light of discussions that have been initiated with the OSCSEA to establish a joint OSCSEA-IASC help desk. The Field Support Team could be brought in for specific requests and provide in-depth support where needed. TAG colleagues were positive about this initiative, although IOM suggested to adapt the ToRs of the FST, to clearly distinguish it from the TAG.

Action point: IASC PSEAH to reach out to Field support team members to re-establish this group.

d. PSEA Perception Survey. Deadline of 3 September.

Annex I: List of Participants

No	Name	Organisation
TAG Members		
1.	Abigail Averbach	The Global Fund
2.	Alexandra Hileman	IOM
3.	Alon Plato	ICVA
4.	Amer Delic	UNHCR
5.	Ann Makome	OSCSEA
6.	Anna Reichenberg	IOM
7.	Carina Hickling	NRC
8.	Christos Mylonas	WHO
9.	Clarissa Rossetti	IOM
10.	Coline Rapneau	CHS Alliance
11.	Denise Hauser	OHCHR
12.	Desiree Bartosiak	WVI
13.	Ivana Chapcakova	UNICEF
14.	Jane Boissonneault	OSCSEA
15.	Joanne Dunn	IFRC
16.	Julia Schipper	UNOPS
17.	Karen Barnett	Mercy Corps

18.	Laura Silva	IFRC
19.	Linda Poteat	FAO
20.	Liz Pender	UNFPA
21.	Luiza Lacerda Bogado	World Bank
22.	Madalina Georgiana Lumaicu	DRC
23.	Margaret Lamunu	WHO
24.	Najla Nassif Palma	Victims Rights Advocate
25.	Nana Elsler	UN HABITAT
26.	Natalia Macdonald	WFP
27.	Natasha Sharp	Oxfam
28.	Paulien Vandendriessche	ICRC
29.	Petra Forsstrom De Leon	The Global Fund
30.	Sonja Wendlinger	OSCSEA
31.	Thymee Ndour	UNFPA
32.	Valeria Bove	OVRA
33.	Yanthe Cornelissen	UNDP
34.	Yoko Iwasa	UNHCR
OCHA/IASC PSEAH Team		
35.	Charlotte Helletzgruber	PSEAH Advisor
36.	Halid Zewdu Feleke	Associate Expert, PSEAH
37.	Joe Levy Brown	Intern, PSEAH
38.	Kirstie Farmer	PSEAH Advisor
39.	Shazia Nigar	Intern, PSEAH
40.	Yuliya Pyrig	Programme Management Officer, IASB
Guest Speakers		
41.	Miroslava Satinova	UNHCR HR
42.	Susanna Waltman	UNHCR Legal